

Region 3 GPRA Baseline RCRA Corrective Action Facility

Exide Technologies (General Battery Corporation)

Nolan Street and Spring Valley Road

Laureldale, PA 19603

Congressional District 6

EPA ID #: PAD990753089

Last Updated 09/24/2001

Current Progress at the Site

The EPA issued the [Administrative Order on Consent](#) (AOC) to the Exide Technologies in August 2000. As part of the AOC requirements, Exide will collect additional soil samples in Laureldale Borough and Muhlenberg Township to assess the extent of soil lead concentrations that are above EPA's screening levels. Exide will determine the clean-up levels for lead in soil using EPA approved methods. Each property within the boundary of the determined clean-up levels will be sampled for lead in soil. Properties that have an average lead exposure above the determined lead clean-up levels will be remediated. As an interim measure, the AOC requires Exide to [clean-up nineteen properties](#) adjacent to the facility as directed by a Consent Order and Agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), which was



Figure 1 Exide Technologies, Laureldale, PA

issued on May 22, 2000. The clean-up of the nineteen properties was completed in October 2000. In early November 2000 and at EPA's request, Exide voluntarily tested the soils of an approximately additional twenty properties in the northern proximity of the facility. Four of the twenty-two properties require no further corrective action. The remaining 18 properties will be further evaluated pursuant to the AOC.

A public comment period was set from September 8 through October 23, 2000. A public meeting was held on September 27, 2000 at the Muhlenberg Middle School, 801 E. Bellevue Street, Reading, Pennsylvania, for the community and all other interested parties to hear a description of the AOC and to ask questions. The meeting was attended by a total of 37 people, including representatives of EPA, PADEP, the local government, and citizens. This was an opportunity for the public to comment on the AOC and to present any issues and concerns. Comments and oral testimony given at the meeting and comments received during the comment period were considered and addressed by EPA in the [Response to Comments](#) and summarized in the [RTC fact sheet](#).

Recent Progress and Developments

(1st Qtr. 2001)

The AOC became effective March 6, 2001. Exide submitted the Draft Step 1 Environmental Sampling Work Plan for EPA's review. EPA had several comments on the work plan. Exide is currently revising the work plan in response to EPA's comments. Although the work plan requires some revisions, EPA has approved the first step of the soil sampling event.

Exide began the investigation in mid-April. The first step entails collecting approximately 110 discrete supplemental soil samples in Laureldale Borough and Muhlenberg Township to refine the boundaries of the study area. To properly oversee the work, EPA collected split soil samples with Exide at various locations to ensure the validity of the soil analyses.

The soil samples were analyzed and soil lead concentration values were inserted into a geostatistical analysis (Kriging) to identify areas that are not likely to exceed 400 parts per million (ppm) for lead in soil. This defined the extent of contamination (i.e., study area)

(2nd Qtr. 2001)

EPA approved the Step 1 Environmental Sampling Work Plan. The Work Plan entails two phases of soil sampling. The first phase is to refine the boundaries of the study area. The second phase is to determine the average lead concentration in soil for those properties within the study area.

During the month of April and early May, Exide collected approximately 88 soil samples in Laureldale Borough and Muhlenberg Township to refine the boundaries of the study area. The soil samples were analyzed and soil lead results were used to identify areas that are not likely to exceed 400 parts per million (ppm) for lead in soil. This defined the extent of the study area.

Properties within the study area received a letter from Exide asking permission to conduct soil sampling. Residents that have agreed to the soil sampling have had their property sampled or will be sampled shortly. The purpose of the soil sampling is to determine the average lead concentration for each property. It is expected that the property soil sampling will be completed by the end of the summer. Property owners will receive the results of the soil sampling in early Fall.

EPA, PADEP and Exide investigated [Bernhart Park](#) during the month of June. The assessment consists of soil, sediment and surface water sampling. EPA is currently reviewing the results of the sampling. EPA will present the findings of the assessment at the public meeting in August.

Exide submitted the Step 2 Environmental and Human Health Sampling Work Plan, which is a follow-up to the Step 1 Work Plan. The Step 2 Work Plan entails the Risk Assessment Sampling (i.e., soil, dust, and tap water sampling and paint screening), Blood Lead Study, and Site-Specific Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessment Sampling and Blood Lead Study will focus on the dwelling of the most vulnerable residents (e.g., children under the age of 84 months, and pregnant women). The data will be incorporated in the Site-Specific Risk Assessment to determine the clean-up levels for lead in soil. EPA is currently reviewing the Step 2 Work Plan.

(3rd Qtr. 2001)

EPA has received and is currently reviewing the Bernhart Park Assessment Report. In addition to Bernhart Park, the review of the Step 2 Work Plan is ongoing. EPA anticipates to conduct a public meeting in November to present the progress of the investigation and to answer questions.

Site Description

The Exide Technologies Site occupies approximately 50 acres of land and is located in Laureldale Borough and Muhlenberg Township, just northeast of Reading, PA. The Facility began operating as a battery manufacturing plant in the mid-1930s under the ownership of the Bowers Battery Company. General Battery Corporation purchased the facility in 1958, and was itself acquired by Exide in 1987. The Facility currently recycles lead batteries. Spent lead-acid batteries are sent to a battery breaker unit where lead, plastic and acid are separated. The recycled lead is smelted and cast into lead-alloy bars to make new battery plates. As a result of approximately 35 years of lead smelter operation prior to the installation of air pollution controls and the advent of the Clean Air Act of 1970, Exide contributed to lead contamination in soil of the surrounding areas of the Facility. Currently, the Exide plant operates in compliance with air permits issued by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Air Quality.

Site Responsibility

Off-site investigation and remediation for lead in soil are being implemented in accordance with

the 7003 Administrative Order on Consent that became effective February 2001. On-site RCRA Corrective Action activities at the Exide facility are conducted in accordance with the federal RCRA Corrective Action Permit that was issued on November 7, 1988 and was renewed September 1999.

Contaminants

Off-site contaminants of concern include lead contamination in soil and the potential of indoor lead dust contamination. On-site concerns are antimony, arsenic, cadmium and lead in soil and groundwater.

Community Interaction

The community has been vocal about their concerns with Exide's operations. EPA has interacted with the public in numerous occasions through public meetings, responding to controlled correspondence and answering phone calls.

There will be future opportunities for the public to review and comment on the Assessment and Remediation Work Plans with respect to the off-site investigation and remediation. The work plans will be available for review at the Muhlenberg Community library and the EPA Region III office. A public meeting will be held to present the content of the proposed work plans and to respond to any questions that the public may have.

Lead Blood Sampling Location

Residents who wish to have their children tested for lead blood levels free of charge can go to Omega Medical Laboratories. Please specify that the lead blood test is under the Exide program in order to receive this free service. The facility is located at:

Fairgrounds Square Mall
Reading, PA
(610) 921-0305

Government Contacts

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Information Repositories

An information repository containing documents related to the site is maintained at the following locations:

U.S. EPA Region III
1650 Arch Street,
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 814-5467

Muhlenberg Community Library
3612 Kutztown Road
Laureldale, PA 19605
Hours: Mon & Thurs: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Tues & Wed: 12:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Fri: 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sat: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Contact: Annette Pendleton
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For more information about EPA's corrective action webpage, including Environmental Indicators, please visit our site at: www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/correctiveaction.htm